

Message Text

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SUBJECT: BITTERNESS OVER CHARGES THAT LOYALIST POLITICIANS
ARE "GODFATHERS" OF VIOLENCE

1. CURRENT ACRIMONY IN NORTHERN IRELAND CENTERS ON ACCUSATIONS THAT CERTAIN LOYALIST POLITICIANS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN TERRORISM. CHARGES FIRST EMERGED IN BELFAST SUNDAY NEWS DECEMBER 13 EMANATING FROM UNNAMED SPOKESMEN FROM ULSTER LOYALIST CENTRAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE (ULCCC). AMONG OTHER ALLEGATIONS: ONE LOYALIST POLITICIAN WAS THE BRAINS BEHIND A SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS IN 1968 THAT LED TO THE FALL OF THE O'NEILL GOVERNMENT, ANOTHER POLITICIAN OFFERED TO PRODUCE THIRTY THOUSAND POUNDS STERLING FOR THE PURCHASE OF ARMS AND EXPLOSIVES FOR THE USE OF PARAMILITARIES AND TWO POLITICIANS HAD FORMED, ARMED AND LATER STOOD DOWN, A PRIVATE ARMY. LATER IN THE WEEK THE ULCCC ISSUED FRESH CLAIMS THAT MEMBERS OF THE ORANGE ORDER ARE AWARE OF ARMS AND AMMO DUMPS.

2. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY MP GERRY FITT IN HOUSE OF COMMONS DECEMBER 16 SPEAKING IN DEBATE ON RENEWAL OF EMERGENCY LEGISLATION OF ULSTER CONNECTED THREE LOYALIST
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POLITICIANS, IAN PAISLEY, ERNEST BAIRD AND JOHN TAYLOR, WITH BEING INVOLVED IN PARAMILITARY ACTIVITIES. PAISLEY WAS CONNECTED WITH THE BOMBINGS, BAIRD WITH THE THIRTY THOUSAND POUNDS AND JOHN TAYLOR ALLEGEDLY WAS PRESENT WHEN A PLOT TO ASSASSINATE ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP WILLIAM PHILBIN WAS DISCUSSED. FITT THEN AND IN SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEWS STRESSED HIS INTENTION WAS FIRST

TO SHOW HOW IRRESPONSIBLE ULCCC AND PRESS HAD BEEN TO PUBLIC ALLEGATIONS WITHOUT GIVING NAMES AND, SECOND, TO INITIATE AN INVESTIGATION OF CHARGES. HE HAS NOT HOWEVER REPEATED ANY OF HIS SUSPICIONS OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT DESPITE CHALLENGES FROM BAIRD AND TAYLOR THAT HE DO SO.

3. FITT VERSUS THE REST IS ALL FAIRLY POLITICS-AS-USUAL IN NORTHERN IRELAND CONTEXT AND IS UNLIKELY TO HAVE ANY LASTING EFFECT. PAISLEY HAS DECLARED HIMSELF CLEARED BY THE SCARMAN REPORT, THE ULCCC HAS BEGUN TO WAFFLE ON THE CHARGES, RECALLING THAT THE ACTIVITIES WERE IN OR BEFORE 1972, AND THE ORANGE ORDER HAS DENIED THAT THERE IS ANY "OFFICIAL" AWARENESS OF ARMS SUPPLIES. THE IMPORTANT FACTOR IS WHETHER THE ULCCC IS STARTING A CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT TRADITIONAL LOYALIST POLITICIANS.SPICER

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